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ABSTRACT

The study examines changes since 1987 in the involvement of state departments of education (SDEs) in school/college collaborations and their support of such collaborations. It also investigates the roles of SDEs and others in initiating collaborations, strategies for intervention, aids and barriers to collaboration, relations with higher education, the organization of collaborative activities within SDEs, differences among SDEs in their level of involvement, and future plans. It is concluded that involvement of SDEs in school/college collaborations is increasing. External support of local level collaborations is important, especially in the early years of a collaboration. Commitment and pressure by state political leaders, as well as resources and environment, affect SDEs' involvement. Involvement by higher education appears to be increasing. For many SDEs, development and support of collaborative activities have generated increased responsibilities and activities, additional staff engaged in collaborative activities, and, in some cases, new organizational units to serve the demands of collaboration. (24 references) (JDD)

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THE ROLE OF STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL/COLLEGE COLLABORATIONS

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ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Red Lion-Jantzen Beach in Portland, Oregon, November 1-4, 1990. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Public schools and higher education in the U.S. have become inextricably linked; that the actions and problems of one affect the other has been amply demonstrated. Thus, colleges spend substantial resources providing remedial education that students should have learned in high school. For their part, elementary and secondary schools are dependent on the quality of teachers who too often are inadequately prepared by colleges and universities to teach in today's culturally diverse classrooms. The loss of almost half of our African American and Latino youth in many urban school districts, who drop out of our schools without graduating and without skills, directly affects not only our schools (and the fabric of our society) but colleges and universities as well.

Higher education faces serious shortages of faculty in the next few years, in part because so few minorities and women "make it" through the academic process. Today, there is growing recognition that the public schools and higher education share responsibility for these problems and that neither has the ability or the resources to solve them alone (Boyer, 1983; Hoyle, 1989). One response to this situation has been a rise in collaborative efforts between public schools and colleges to try to solve their common problems.

Much of the earlier literature on collaboration has addressed collaborations between individual schools or school districts and one or two colleges or universities (e.g., Maeroff, 1983) with many case studies dominating the literature (e.g., Huebner et al., 1989; Nur, 1986; Williams, 1986). Scant attention has been paid to the role of state departments of educations (SDEs) in promoting and supporting school/college collaborations. Yet SDEs can -- and sometimes do -- play a vital role in fostering collaborations between the public schools and higher education, for several reasons. First, to a much greater extent than state higher education agencies, SDEs have considerable regulatory authority over the institutions under their purview, i.e., local school systems. Second, in most states, SDEs have long histories of programmatic involvement in the local schools. Third, they bring substantial financial and staff resources to bear on educational matters. Fourth, governors, legislators, and the public at large are pressuring SDEs as perhaps never before to solve the ills of public education. Finally, because collaborative efforts can be tentative and may benefit from third-party interest or intervention, the unique position of the SDEs allows them to play this third-party function (Cates, 1983, p. 1.4). In sum, SDEs have the authority, inclination, resources, impetus, and opportunity to act.

Because SDEs often are key players in promoting school/college collaborations, colleges and universities that seek to engage in these collaborations need to understand both the role that SDEs play and the attitudes of SDE officials and staff toward higher education. What kinds of collaborations are important to SDEs? What kinds of approaches do they take? What kinds of support do they offer, and what requirements do they set for participation? How do SDE officials and staff perceive the interest and actual participation of higher education in school/college collaborations? What problems do SDE officials find in dealing with colleges and universities?

In addition, as we conducted this study, it became clear that many of the barriers faced by SDEs, as well as the strategies they identified to undertake or promote collaborations intended to address educational problems, apply to higher education coordinating agencies, university systems, and individual colleges and universities seeking to sponsor or engage in collaborations with the public school sector. Thus, the study of SDEs' roles in school/college collaborations contributes to our understanding of the broader collaborative process, particularly the role of external ("third-party") agencies and/or higher levels of authority in promoting collaborations between organizations with different purposes, cultures, and structures.

This study builds upon an earlier exploratory study of SDEs' role in school/college collaborations, conducted in 1987 by one of the authors (Hawthorne, 1990). That study found sporadic SDE activity in sponsoring or supporting such collaborations. The current study examines changes since 1987 in SDEs' involvement in and support for school/college collaborations, strategies for intervention, and the coordination of collaborative activities within SDES.

The study was guided by the following research and policy questions:

1. How do state departments of education develop or facilitate school/college collaborations designed to strengthen education? What strategies do they use to initiate, support, and sustain school/college collaborations? What impediments threaten collaborative efforts?

2. From SDEs' perspective, what roles do higher education agencies and institutions play in supporting or developing collaborations?

3. What factors or conditions within different states appear to encourage or discourage SDEs' interest and ability to promote school/college collaborations?

4. How has participation in collaborative activities affected SDEs' own structure and organization?

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Organizations are becoming increasingly interdependent, because no one organization is fully able to control the environment (Thompson, 1967; Trist, 1983; Gray, 1989). This is probably truer for U.S. educational institutions than for many other organizations, because schools and colleges, with fragmented authority and dependence upon federal, state and local officials, have relatively weak control over the environment, including over other organizations. Consequently, the literature suggests that organizations increasingly are collaborating to control or achieve what they cannot do individually (Gray, 1989).

Collaboration, however, is not easy. It requires organizations to give up a certain amount of control to other organizations (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978), entails bridging of different organization cultures and reward systems (Oakes et al., 1986) and creates uncertainty about the new "rules" (Thompson, 1967). It also demands that the collaborators share both resources and the responsibility for outcomes and future directions of the joint enterprise (Gray, 1989). Collaboration generally is not highly rewarded, in part because such activities are viewed as peripheral to each organization and take place outside the hierarchical lines of authority within each organization (Oakes, et al., 1986; Sirotnik and Goodlad, 1988; St. John, 1989). In some cases of collaboration, no one individual or agency is in charge. Leadership is diffused. Finally, by its nature, collaboration is a dynamic, ever-changing process; things never fully settle down (Rogers et al., 1982; Gray, 1989).

State departments of education have dual roles in school/college collaborations. First, as the hierarchical heads of state K-12 public school systems, SDEs may support -- or pressure -- subordinate school districts to collaborate. SDEs have a variety of strategies available to them to mobilize local-level collaborations. For example, they may simply allow local collaborations to arise as they will, with limited SDE support but without interfering in such efforts. They may provide incentive funds for school districts to carry out SDE--developed programs. They may change policies to foster such initiatives.

Alternatively, they may mandate school district participation in collaborative activities as a condition of state funding. Each such strategy has advantages and disadvantages. Thus, while incentive funding stimulates voluntary performance, schools (like other dependent organizations) may divert or subvert incentive funds for their own purposes (Downs, 1976; Timar and Kirp, 1989). Centralized programs and requirements for collaboration often fail because they do not take local contexts into account (Bardach and Kagan, 1982); nor in most states can SDEs require higher education institutions to collaborate.

Second, as one segment of states' total education systems, SDEs may themselves collaborate (e.g., with state-level higher education coordinating agencies or university systems). In this case, they do not simply facilitate local-level collaborations but may initiate, implement, and participate in collaborations themselves. Just like individual schools and colleges, when SDEs enter collaborations, they are forced to give up some degree of control, deal with different cultures and uncertain expectations, and subject themselves to pressures for change. For SDEs, then, collaboration with other organizations is likely to be a lengthy, uneven and perhaps difficult process. As SDEs become more involved in school/college collaborations, we would expect them to set up more formal organizational structures to handle the special demands of collaboration -- for example, to establish special "boundary-spanning units" (designed in part to buffer the core organization from environmental influences) or to designate specific individuals with such responsibility (Thompson, 1967; Cameron and Whetten, 1981). Thus, collaboration may result in changes in SDEs' organizational structure, as well as in their policies, priorities, and budget allocations. This study examines some of those changes.

SCOPE AND DESIGN OF STUDY

This study examines the roles of state departments of education in initiating, facilitating and participating in collaborations between the public schools and higher education. The primary method used was a nationwide survey of the activities of U.S. SDEs. Multiple copies of the questionnaire were sent to each superintendent or commissioner of education for completion by executive-level staff members in each SDE. When an SDE provided responses from more than one individual, we constructed a profile for each state. A total of 39 states (78 percent response rate) was included in the analysis. Although multiple responses provided a more complete picture of an SDE's collaborative activities, it appears likely that this study under-reports such activities, since respondents sometimes indicated lack of knowledge of activities in other SDE units. There appeared to be no response bias by size of state, geographic region, or expenditures per pupil. Table 1 shows the response history of the survey.

After reviewing the completed survey instruments, we conducted in-depth, follow-up telephone interviews with SDE and university staff in seven states: California, Florida, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah. These states were selected because they had SDEs who were active -- in most cases, quite active -- in collaboration, and because they represented different regions of the country. These interviews provided further understanding of SDEs' roles, approaches, problems, and outcomes of SDE-supported collaboratives. The study also draws upon a review of pertinent scholarly and applied literature on collaborations.

Table 1
Number of Completed Questionnaires

# Responses by State	# States Responding	Total Responses
1	20	20
2	10	20
3	6	18
4	2	8
5	1	0
6	1	6
TOTAL	39	72

FINDINGS

This section examines the kinds of collaborative programs and areas in which state departments of education are involved, their and others' roles in initiating collaborations, strategies for intervention, aids and barriers to collaboration, relations with higher education, the organization of collaborative activities within SDEs, differences among SDEs in their level of involvement, and future plans.

Areas of Collaboration

State departments of education promote or participate in some manner in a variety of collaborative areas and programs linking schools and colleges, ranging from programs to promote minority student persistence to professional development activities for K-12 teachers and administrators to the development of articulation programs in vocational education. Most often, these are fairly traditional areas of collaboration, i.e., professional development of teachers and administrators (83%), pre-service teacher or administrator education (60%), and articulation agreements (55%).

Yet in some states, SDEs are engaging in such traditional areas in new ways. In California, for example, the SDE in collaboration with the California State University system has initiated a set of "comprehensive teacher education institutes" across the state in which the academic, professional, and field preparation of teachers is integrated through joint curriculum, faculty, and governance structures. By contrast, relatively few SDEs are collaboratively engaged in college and university faculty development, and less than half say they are involved in collaborative programs directed to high school or college persistence and graduation of minority students. Areas of collaboration also appear to be shifting: SDEs in 1990 less often noted collaborative activities directed toward minority students or toward mathematics and science curriculum than they had in the 1987 survey.

Initiation of Collaborations

State departments of education in recent years have become significant catalysts for bringing about collaboration between schools and colleges. In our survey, 92% of SDEs said that their own organizations were a major impetus for statewide collaborative projects. Of course, since our respondents were SDE officials, this high percentage is perhaps not surprising, but other studies (e.g., Cates, 1983) also note the key role that SDEs can or do play. Moreover, a majority of SDES listed several significant collaborative projects which they said they had initiated. New York's SDE, for example, developed the statewide Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP), in which colleges and universities work with minority youngsters to help prepare and encourage them to enter science and technology fields; 85% of STEP "graduates" have undertaken science or technology majors in college. In Virginia, the SDE worked closely with the Virginia Community College System to develop "2+2" programs in vocational education. In Florida, the SDE has developed collaborative projects to provide alternative teacher preparation centers, revised mathematics curriculum, statewide articulation agreements, and other projects.

Legislatures are also a key catalyst for bringing about statewide school/college collaboratives, with 44% of the SDEs naming their legislatures. (By contrast, governors were seen as influential in only six states.) A number of SDE respondents who were interviewed acknowledged that without legislative mandate, threat, or incentive, some major collaborative projects would never have been undertaken. In New York, for example, the Legislature enacted a bill to establish the Liberty Partnerships, an innovative project that brings together local-level colleges, schools or school districts, and community-based organizations (ranging from Girl Scouts to African American churches) to provide an encompassing support system to reduce drop out rates among high-risk students. While New York's SDE translated the legislation into a workable program, administers it and provides a range of activities to assist the partnerships, the legislature developed the initial program features and requirements. On the other hand, SDE respondents sometimes saw legislative influence as problematic, intrusive, or unhelpful; one SDE, for example, said that the legislature sometimes imposed hastily formed concepts and requirements, without adequately considering how these could be implemented. Others indicated lack of or inadequate funding or premature withdrawal of funding.

Higher education entities or staff were also seen as significant influences for creating statewide collaborative projects. Over 50% of SDEs cited higher education coordinating boards, institutions, or individual administrators or faculty as providing a major impetus for statewide collaborations, with post-secondary education coordinating or governing boards named most often.

Strategies for Intervention

Although state departments of education do initiate collaborations, more often they facilitate collaborations developed by others, especially at the local school/college level. SDEs engage in a variety of strategies to encourage school/college collaboration. Two-thirds of SDEs have sponsored conferences focused on collaboration, and the vast majority have provided some kind of technical assistance (most often collection and maintenance of data) and of dissemination of collaborative activities (such as regular newsletters, press releases, annual reports, and computer communication). SDE involvement in school/college collaboration appears to have increased significantly in the last three years. In 1987, 50% of responding SDEs said they helped local districts to begin and to maintain school/college collaborations; in 1990, over 80% of SDEs said they did so.

SDEs have traditionally exercised greater involvement and often control over local activities than have state-level postsecondary institutions. This direct involvement extends to SDEs' "third party" interventions in school/college collaborations. We asked SDEs if they engaged in six types of approaches to facilitation of school/college collaborations: directing or coordinating, consulting or advising, technical assistance, dissemination of information, training, or funding. Three-quarters of the SDEs said that they directed or coordinated school/college collaborations (Table 2).

Nearly two-thirds of the SDEs reported that they provide funding for collaborative activities, ranging from $10,000 to more than $42 million for the last fiscal year (Table 2). (However, many respondents were unable to separate amounts expended for collaboration from other agency activities; we suspect that some SDEs underreported expenditures directed to collaborations, while others apparently reported their agencies' entire budgets.) These SDE funds helped to support meetings, conferences, consultants, staff travel, coordination of 2+2 programs, professional development activities, curriculum development, regional planning efforts, program operation, program and audio-visual department, grant funding, and printing and communication.

Table 2

Strategies for Intervention, by Type of Statewide Agency*
(As Perceived by SDE Respondents)

Direct/ Coord.	Consult/ Advise	Tech. Assist.	Dissem.	Train	Fund	
SDE	75%	78%	83%	83%	48%	65%
PSE Coord Ag.	43	40	43	45	23	23
Univ System	38	46	45	43	38	10
Com Col Sys.	28	35	35	33	23	8

*For each of these strategies except funding, we asked SDEs to check whether or not they, postsecondary coordinating agencies, university system offices, or state community college offices engaged in them. We asked SDEs, in a separate, open-ended question, to name other institutions or organizations in their state that funded collaborations; therefore, funding figures are not fully comparable with other strategies.

By contrast, state-level higher education agencies and institutions, at least as perceived by SDE staff, were much less directive and much less active overall in school/college collaborations (Table 2). Of responding SDEs, 41% reported that state higher education agencies, universities or colleges provided funds for school/college collaborations, in addition to their own agencies. Since many states do not have university systems, the percentages suggest that more university systems are active than are state higher education agencies. Still, these figures probably underreport higher education's involvement and support. Some SDE respondents had no contact with higher education and no involvement in areas in which higher education might be actively engaged.

Aids and Impediments to Collaboration

Perhaps because involvement by state departments of education in school/college collaborations is relatively new, there was no consensus among SDE respondents regarding factors important for successful collaborations. However, a sense of common purpose coupled with planning and communication were most often mentioned. "Having everyone involved agree 'up-front' on the conditions for collaboration," "a common goal" and "mutual goal setting" were such responses. Several respondents mentioned third-party assistance (including legislative initiatives), administrative support and leadership, and the importance of having the "right" people on collaborative assignments, i.e., individuals who were willing to work together and who represented the relevant agencies, schools, and colleges.

Again perhaps because their involvement is relatively new, not many SDE respondents said that collaborations they had tried to foster had failed (28%) or that statewide projects had been terminated (15%). Of those who did, respondents cited problems such as lack of communication and/or cooperation, lack of a sense of ownership (reflected in low commitment, inadequate time), and exploitation of one of the parties. Inadequate funds, insufficient staff or time, and culture differences between school and college participants were also problems in developing or maintaining collaborations. To deal with these problems, SDEs in our interviews said they have developed a number of strategies, including consensus building, cooptation of "problem" partners, reformulation of projects into more manageable size and into projects that can yield "early successes," and political trade offs to gain more funding.

Relations with Higher Education

Relations with higher education institutions or individuals were often a point of friction in school/college collaborations. A theme in many surveys was that higher education participants or potential participants were reluctant to participate and that when they did they could be uncooperative and unwilling to join

as equal partners with K-12 members of the group. One problem noted frequently by SDEs in our interviews was the lack of institutional support, especially in terms of the tenure and promotion process, for higher education faculty to collaborate with the schools. SDE respondents also believed that the higher education community remains largely "ignorant of K-12 programs" and "more talk than action." Finally, SDE respondents noted that they, school district faculty and higher education faculty may all hold differing values and philosophies regarding, for example, teacher preparation -- making collaboration difficult and sometimes confrontational.

Yet, several SDE respondents who were interviewed said that relations with higher education were improving. We had expected that pressures for collaboration and resulting renegotiation of "turf" might increase tensions between the public school and higher education sectors; instead, SDE respondents said that self-interest, as well as legislative mandates and pressures were bringing the two parties closer together. Nevertheless, SDEs still often view higher education's commitment to school/college collaboration as marginal. One SDE noted that when the governor cut the budgets of all education segments, the university immediately cut out funds for several collaborative projects; by contrast, the SDE found funds to continue collaborative projects.

Coordination of Collaborative Tasks Within SDEs

State departments of education are indeed establishing more formal organizational structures or mechanisms to handle the special demands of collaboration. Between the 1987 and 1990 surveys, the number of SDEs responding that they had an office specifically concerned with school/college collaboration increased from two (California and New York) to seven: Alabama, California, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, and South Dakota. Roughly another one-third of the SDEs have designated specific individuals to coordinate collaborative activities. Of the six SDEs most highly active in fostering school/college collaborations (see below), four have special units. In California, for example, the Intersegmental Relations Division is the central liaison for all collaborative activities with higher education, ranging from teacher preparation to curriculum projects to college readiness programs. The division sponsors and administers statewide collaborative projects, acts as a broader policy analysis office for the state superintendent, and communicates and interprets the views and concerns of higher education institutions to other SDE divisions and vice versa. Most special units are more limited in scope and are charged primarily with such tasks as articulation, teacher education and certification, collaboration with community resources, and coordinating regional in-service centers.

However, the majority of SDEs identified neither a specific unit nor a specific individual for the task of handling collaborations, yet some were actively engaged in collaborations. More-

over, it is critical to note that, whether or not an SDE assigned collaborative responsibilities to a special unit, both our survey and our interviews found that units throughout the SDE participated in collaborative activities in some manner often, it appears, without knowledge of one another's activities.

SDEs have experienced a number of changes in the coordination of collaborative tasks in the last three years or so. Our interviews found that some special units that in theory have existed for a number of years have only recently begun to coordinate collaborative tasks in any significant way and to be recognized by the SDE leadership as responsible for doing so. Other units have expanded the scope of their responsibilities in the last few years and sometimes have undertaken collaborations not just with higher education but with business and community organizations as well, as in California and New York. Although the number of SDE professional staff specifically assigned to collaborative activities (whether or not a special unit exists) remains small, our interviews found that these numbers have increased over the past few years. Most importantly, our interviews suggested that in last few years many more units and divisions within SDEs (e.g., units focused on curriculum, special education, teacher certification, and adult education) are collaborating with higher education.

Differences Among State Departments of Education

State departments of education differ substantially in their level of participation in school/college collaborations. To measure their participation level, we constructed a rough scale (ranging from 0 to 9 points) for which we assigned one point if the SDE said they did each of the following: direct or coordinate collaborations; consult or advise collaborations; provide technical assistance; disseminate information; train school or college personnel; provide funds; identify a special SDE office concerned with collaboration or assign a specific individual to do so. For SDE-initiated major collaborative programs, we assigned no points if no collaborations were listed; 1 point if one or two were listed; 2 points if three or more were listed. The range was from 0 to 9 points.

Table 3
SDEs Most Active in School/College Collaborations

Exceptionally active SDEs (9 points):

Alabama	Florida	New York
California	Michigan	Virginia

Very active SDEs (8 points):

Kentucky	Oklahoma	Tennessee
New Jersey	South Dakota	Texas
North Dakota		

As can be seen in Table 3, thirteen SDEs appear to be exceptionally or very active in participating and facilitating school-college collaborations, sometimes undertaking highly innovative approaches. For example, Florida's SDE collaborates on a Reach Out Program to aid disadvantaged students, exemplary elementary math curriculum, computer software analysis, alternative teacher preparation centers, test development, and many other programs. Tennessee's SDE participates in and helps fund the wide-ranging Tennessee Collaborative for Educational Excellence, a program originally fostered by then-governor Lamar Alexander. The Collaborative works to develop instructional strategies to aid minority students' access to or graduation from college, teacher education programs, state-mandated curriculum frameworks, and subject area task forces. The Collaborative uses the full range of strategies, including newsletters, data, collection, and so forth.

Table 4
SDE Participation in Collaborations and Legislative Impetus

SDE Participation in Collaborations	Legislative Impetus for Collaborations		
	Yes	No	Total
High (8-9 points)	8 (47%)	5 (23%)	13 (33%)
Medium (5-7 points)	7 (41%)	12 (55%)	19 (49%)
Low (0-4 points)	2 (12%)	5 (23%)	7 (18%)
TOTAL	17 (100%)	22 (100%)	39 (100%)

Why are some SDEs more actively engaged in collaborations than others? One important factor appears to be legislative interest and/or pressure -- through incentives, requirements, or budgetary threats. When legislatures acted as catalysts for collaborations (as cited by SDEs), SDEs were more likely to be highly active in collaborations (Table 4). Alternatively, when there was legislative support for collaboration in "low" collaboration states, the legislative mandates tended to be limited and highly specific, as in Hawaii, where three statewide collaborative committees address issues of excellence in educational administration. Our The relationship between the types of policy promulgated by legislatures and resultant activity deserves more scrutiny.

Table 5
SDE Participation in Collaborations and Per Pupil Expenditures

SDE Participation Collaborations	Current Expenditures Per Pupil in Public K-12 Schools, 1986-87*			
	High	Medium	Small	Total
High (8-9 points)	2 (22%)	4 (25%)	7 (50%)	13 (33%)
Medium (5-7 points)	5 (56%)	8 (50%)	6 (43%)	19 (49%)
Low (0-4 points)	2 (22%)	4 (25%)	1 (7%)	7 (18%)
TOTAL	9 (100%)	16(100%)	14(100%)	39(100%)

(Note: Per capita personal income showed similar trends.)
*Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 1989

Resources and size of a state's educational system also appear to affect SDE involvement in collaboration, although in opposite ways. States that provide relatively low levels of funding per pupil or and those with relatively large educational systems are more likely to have SDEs actively engaged in school/college collaborations (Tables 5 and 6). It may be that, in poorer states or those with a lower commitment to education, policy makers or educational leaders look to collaborations to find less costly solutions to educational problems. In states with larger and presumably more complex educational systems, collaborations may be important to maintain articulation of students and programs in a system with diverse institutions and multiple points of access or to reduce unnecessary duplication.

Table 6
SDE Participation in Collaborations and Size of Education System

SDE Participation in Collaborations	Enrollments in Public K-12 Schools, 1987*			
	Large	Medium	Small	Total
High (8-9 points)	8 (50%)	3 (23%)	2 (20%)	13 (33%)
Medium (5-7 points)	7 (44%)	8 (62%)	4 (40%)	19 (49%)
Low (0-4 points)	1 (6%)	2 (15%)	4 (40%)	7 (18%)
TOTAL	16 (100%)	13 (100%)	10 (100%)	39 (100%)

*Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 1989

Future Collaboration Plans

Many state departments of education are uncertain what changes may take place in their collaborative activities in the future, although most respondents optimistically believe that these activities will increase or at least not be cut back, despite budget cuts in a number of states. This starkly contrasts with the 1987 study where most respondents indicated uncertainty or reduction in future collaborations. Several interviewed SDE respondents stated that school/college collaborations represented core activities for the SDE and that the SDE would cut other areas before they cut collaborative projects. Other SDEs believe that some collaborative projects (such as those to reduce minority drop-out rates or to expand the pool of individuals in mathematics and science careers) are so crucial to their state's economic or political health that the legislature will continue funding them. In New York, for example, the legislature for several years has refunded three major collabora-

tive programs (one at $13.3 million) at significant levels, despite state budgetary constraints.

Some states are planning major new initiatives. For example, Utah is currently developing The Utah Partnership for Education and Economic Development, a multimillion dollar partnership of public education, higher education, business, and government, with five broad education, research and training goals. However, the SDE respondent noted that continuation of this project is a "high-risk thing," especially because of the funding involved.

Areas in which SDEs expect increased collaboration include a "Schools of the Future" concept in Maryland, in which college faculty will work together with school teachers to improve the quality of teaching and teacher education, regional in-service centers in Arkansas, regional planning efforts in Iowa, minority teacher recruitment in Minnesota, teacher education preparation programs in Kentucky, and options to allow high school students to enroll in university courses in Ohio, among others. Overall, a sizeable number of SDEs anticipate providing greater technical assistance, evaluation, and dissemination of collaborative activities.

Regardless of the uncertain future, SDEs' ongoing role in collaboration seems more assured today than it was just a few years ago. In 1987, approximately 25% of survey respondents anticipated growth in areas of funding, technical assistance, dissemination, and evaluation of collaborations. By contrast, in 1990, 40% expect more funding, 43% expect more evaluation, over 50% expect more technical assistance and dissemination, and over 60% expect new collaborations.

CONCLUSIONS

1. State departments of education appear to be far more actively engaged in initiating and fostering school/college collaborations than they were only three years ago. Today, most SDEs are engaged in collaborative activities, and SDEs expect this activity to continue and expand.

SDEs are providing widespread support for locally initiated collaborations, as well as initiating and implementing collaborations themselves. The types, scope, and duration of these projects vary widely. SDEs use a range of approaches (funding, direct management or coordination, advising, technical assistance, training, and information dissemination) to facilitate local-level collaborations or to initiate statewide collaborations.

2. External support of local-level collaborations (through funding, goal-setting, training and other mechanisms) is important, especially in the early years of a collaboration. Given

adequate time, commitment, and resources, such collaborations can achieve self-sufficiency (See Cates, 1983).

Stable external funding is a factor contributing to the success of collaboratives in the early stages. Our data suggest that without SDE funds many projects would not have been started, and withdrawal of funds led to termination of some projects. In early stages of a collaboration, before the partners in the collaboration can secure organizational funding or reach a consensus on reallocating personnel responsibilities toward collaboration goals, external funding (and other kinds of support) can compensate for absent internal support. The importance of external dollars, of course, depends on both the size of the project and its nature; informal alliances among K-12 and university faculty are less dependent, residential institutes for faculty development are more dependent on outside funds. Time is important in another way as well: premature withdrawal of any resource (funds, personnel, etc.) may makes people feel that the process of collaboration has been ineffective when in fact it simply required more time; this may affect the partners' attitudes and in turn their commitment to the collaboration.

By themselves, however, state funding and other external supports are not sufficient to maintain collaborations over time. Our data (as well as other studies) suggest that the partners themselves must share common goals, perceive that the collaboration advances their own (and, if significant resources are required, their institutions') self interests, and make a genuine commitment to the project in terms of leadership, personnel time, and other resources.

Some SDE-initiated and supported collaborations appear to have become institutionalized -- i.e., they appear to have achieved an ongoing, more formal existence. A number of such collaborations, such as articulation agreements in Florida, the Entry-Year Assistance Program in Oklahoma, or the "2+2" vocational education program in Texas, have existed for five, ten, or even more years. Some SDE respondents are confident that, if state funding were eliminated, institutional partners could and would reallocate funds to maintain some projects, though others would likely cease. In other cases, SDEs believe that the collaborations have become so integral to the state that they are part of the base state budget. In addition, reports from the SDEs that many school/college partnerships are developing guidelines and procedures, clarifying goals, and articulating needs suggest that many of these efforts are moving toward a more "mature" stage of development -- i.e., toward a formal, bureaucratized organization (Kimberly and Miles, 1980; Cameron and Whetten, 1981).

3. Commitment and pressure by state political leaders, as well as resources and environment, affect SDEs' involvement in collaborations.

State legislatures often play an important role in promoting school/college collaborations, by requiring, pressuring or persuading, or inducing SDEs to become actively engaged in collaborative activities. We suspect that they may play a similar role (though perhaps less frequently) in prompting higher education agencies or institutions to collaborate with their K-12 colleagues. This reflects two important points. First, an external impetus is often required to bring about system change, here to bring together the public K-12 and higher education systems (Cates, 1983). Second, over the past decade, state legislatures have increased their attention to education matters in response to public concerns about the state of public education (Hill, 1989; Wise, 1988). They have established special commissions, added requirements for secondary school graduation, and embarked on a variety of new programs. Legislatures have turned to school/college collaborations as one strategy for improving the schools. In addition, at a time when many states are facing budget constraints, legislatures may see collaborations as a way to cut state costs by reducing unnecessary duplication of effort; they may thus find collaborations even more attractive in the future.

In addition, in poorer states, those with a lesser commitment to fund education, and those with large and complex K-12 systems, SDEs appear more likely to take advantage of collaborative strategies to overcome budget shortages or to harmonize complex systems. Finally, although our evidence is anecdotal, it appears that individual state traditions of local district autonomy affect how much SDEs are likely to "direct" collaborations or to take actions that would be perceived by districts as directive.

4. At least as seen by SDEs, the role of higher education in initiating collaborations, especially at the state level, remains limited, although higher education agencies, systems and institutions play very significant roles in some states. Moreover, involvement by higher education appears to be increasing.

In some states, higher education agencies or university systems, e.g., in Arkansas, California, New Jersey, and Tennessee, have initiated major collaborative efforts which offer great promise. Although higher education plays a smaller role in other states, our interviews suggested that SDE-higher education relations are improving and that the latter's involvement in collaborations was increasing. Barriers, however, stand in the way of a greater higher education role; chief among these barriers are the lack of institutional rewards and incentives for participation in school/college collaboratives and the differences in cultures, perceptions and priorities of the two sectors.

5. For many state departments of education, development and support of collaborative activities have generated increased responsibilities and activities, additional staff engaged in

collaborative activities and, in some cases, new organizational units to serve the demands of collaboration.

Although the total number of special units and professional staff charged specifically to promote and coordinate school/college collaboration for the SDEs remains small, our data indicate that these units and staff have increased significantly in the past three to five years. The fact that four of the six SDEs most active in collaboration have established some kind of special unit for this purpose suggests that such organizational structures reflect the priority SDEs give to collaboration and facilitate further SDE participation through the advocacy of collaboration of the unit. Most importantly, however, our interviews suggest that, even when specific units and/or individuals are designated to handle collaborations, responsibility for collaborative activities is often spread through the entire organization. That is, many more units within the SDE (e.g., units focused on special education, curriculum or other areas) see collaboration as an important part of accomplishing their missions. Suffusion of the collaboration process throughout the organization holds promise of a more radical transformation of the SDE--one likely to blur boundaries and redefine responsibilities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Clearly, state departments of education can play central roles in fostering school/college collaboration (see Cates, 1983). However, SDEs are not necessarily the only, or always the best, organizations to do so. Higher education institutions, state agencies, and university systems can bring unique strengths to conceptualize, develop, and implement collaborative projects that address critical educational problems. For example, higher education often operates in a more flexible and less regulated climate that may be more appropriate for some types of collaboration. Also, SDEs may be less interested in fostering collaborations for certain issues important to higher education, such as improving college graduation rates of underrepresented minority students. Higher education, especially state coordinating agencies and statewide university and community college systems, are well-poised to play a leadership role as facilitators of school/college collaboration. To be sure, higher education is an essential ingredient to partnerships for educational improvement, because it offers special expertise and resources not usually available to the schools.

Organizational life cycle theory, which posits that organizations will have different characteristics at different points in their development, can provide an understanding of both the different stages of interorganizational collaborations and the role that external parties like SDEs or higher education agencies can play in such collaborations. In their earliest stages, organizations are characterized by a high degree of uncertainty, lack of formal structure, and considerable ambiguity (Downs,

1967; Kimberly and Miles, 1980). Interorganizational collaborations complicate this evolutionary process because they bring together two or more cultures (in this case, public K-12 and higher education). Initial stages of collaboration, then, are more difficult and more tentative. Cameron and Whetten (1981) hypothesize that during organizations' early stages people judge organizational effectiveness more on the basis of individuals' performances than on the organizations' performance. On the interorganizational level, our data similarly suggest that how participants perceive their own and others' individual performances can be a critical factor in th e ability of the group to sustain itself through the early stages until more stability is attained. During such early stages, SDEs, higher education agencies, and other "sponsors" can help sustain individuals' participation by allowing them adequate time and placing some priority on the collaboration assignment. Without that support, individuals from different organizations may be unable to wait out the early, chaotic adjustment period. In such cases, individuals may exercise the options of exit, voice, or loyalty (Hirschman, 1970) or perhaps subversion (Cameron and Whetten, 1981).

Whoever seeks to foster collaborations must maintain a delicate balance between central coordination and individual partners' autonomy. Third parties can help collaborations accomplish their intended purposes by setting overall goals and directions and providing ongoing quality control. Further, third parties--through monitoring, mandating, or regulating processes--may help fragile efforts gain and maintain momentum in the early stages of development. Timely infusion of resources can aid new collaborative efforts and can sustain and rekindle more mature projects. Collaborations appear to be most effective when the self-interest of each organization is understood by everyone (organizationally and individually) involved and major responsibility and 'ownership' comes from the partners. Third parties must be attentive to the partners' differing cultures. For example, too often SDEs or other state actors have unrealistic expectations and top-down approaches that disturb their higher education partners.

Work toward institutionalization or stabilization of collaborative efforts necessitates moving them from a stage of entrepreneurial activity focused on individual actors to one with more formal structure, processes, and focus. Our data show that change in staff assignments and participation frequently harmed collaborative efforts. That suggests that participating agencies, schools, and colleges should assign multiple participants to share involvement in the collaborative effort.

Collaboration is but one vehicle of choice for addressing educational problems, and it does have costs: staff often sacrifice or compromise other responsibilities; reward systems at some agencies and institutions militate against participation in collaborative efforts; time spent in adjusting and supporting

changes made by participating parties can be extensive and expensive; and startup costs are high because of lengthy exploration and testing by the parties. As a relatively contemporary approach, there are may unknowns, and there are understandable reservations regarding investing time and resources with both process and outcomes so uncertain.

Successful collaborations share resources and bring together the major actors who can affect policies and who implement solutions to common problems. One benefit of collaboration, not explicit in these data, is the building of bonds between individuals as well as units across organizations. As people begin to communicate their perspectives and knowledge, opportunities to work together effectively in additional areas are more likely. The building of trust, commitment to collaboration, and access to resources outside the organization also permeate participating organizations' ethos and help break down traditional barriers, especially cultural differences that have existed and continue to exist between higher education and K-12 institutions and groups. For all these reasons, our study suggests that school/college collaborations and efforts by SDEs and higher education entities and others to promote them will continue to be an important means for addressing the problems and challenges that will confront our educational system in the coming years.

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